

REMARKS

Claims 1-22 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1, 8, 13 and 17 are amended. No new matter is added. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections are respectfully requested.

Applicants appreciate the courtesies shown to Applicants' representative by Examiners Wu and Shikhman in the January 3, 2008 personal interview. Applicants' separate record of the substance of the interview is incorporated into the following remarks.

I. The Claims Define Patentable Subject Matter

The Office Action rejects claims 1-22 under 35 U.S.C. §103 over U.S. Patent No. 5,887,073 to Fazzari et al. (Fazzari) in view of Publication "Mixed Raster Content (MRC) Model for Compound Image Compression," by Queiroz et al. (Queiroz) and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,658,136 to Brumitt. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Independent claim 1 recites, *inter alia*, a blob identification module "to identify inner blobs, wherein image data of the inner blobs are merged into the grayscale background plane." Independent claims 13 and 17 recite similar subject matter. Independent claim 8 recites, *inter alia*, "identifying inner blobs, wherein image data of the inner blobs are merged into the grayscale background plane." Support for the amendments can be found in the specification at, for example, paragraph [0166].

As discussed during the January 3 personal interview, Fazzari fails to teach or suggest a blob identification module to identify inner blobs, wherein the image data of the inner blobs are merged into the grayscale background plane. Queiroz and Brumitt fail to cure the deficiencies of Fazzari. Accordingly, the applied references, alone or in any combination, fail to teach or suggest the recited features of independent claims 1, 8, 13 and 17.

For at least these reasons, independent claims 1, 8, 13 and 17 and the claims dependent therefrom, are patentable over the applied references. Withdrawal of the rejection of the claims is respectfully requested.

II. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of the pending claims are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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